

New Berwyn zoning code offers user-friendly experience

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Email



BERWYN – Berwyn business owners and residents who want to improve their properties or construct new development now have an updated, user-friendly zoning code to consult, after the City Council unanimously passed the new ordinance Sept. 12.

The city worked with the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning to create the zoning code, which went into effect Sept. 22.

For residents, the new code provides rules and regulations if they want to put in a fence or make other additions or improvements to their property. It also establishes regulations for commercial districts, including parking locations, materials that can be used for new development, signage, transparency and landscaping, said Jacob Seid, senior planner at CMAP.

He said the previous ordinance was very outdated.

“In the old days, people would have to read two pages of single-spaced text, and it contained things you haven’t heard about in 30 years, with just a lot of outdated provisions,” Seid said. “So if someone wants to open a restaurant, they can go to the new ordinance, see where restaurants are allowed in an easy-to-read table.”

Potential business owners also can see the parking or landscaping requirements and permitting information, he said.

Seid said the new code helps implement the goals of Berwyn’s comprehensive plan, which was adopted in 2012.

There were several opportunities for residents to offer input at public hearings earlier this year, which Seid said was taken into consideration when drafting the ordinance.

“The comprehensive plan served as our guide, as well as public and stakeholder feedback. Public hearings were very valuable,” he said. “We wanted to be deliberate about the decisions because the ordinance will be the law of the land. We know we can’t please everyone, but we feel like we calibrated the regulations so they implement the goal of the plan and reflect the feedback.”

Seid said the ordinance protects each neighborhood’s character, which was important to many Berwyn residents.

“Berwyn has distinct characteristics in different parts of the city. Cermak Road is different than the Depot District, which is different than neighborhood commercial areas,” he said. “We really value our partnership with the city, and this ordinance will allow city leaders and stakeholders to implement the vision the city has for the future.”

Berwyn Mayor Robert Lovero said in an email the updated code was able to address the concerns of residents, department heads and elected officials.

“[The code] moves the City of Berwyn forward towards achieving the Berwyn Comprehensive Plan’s commitment to promote a sustainable environment that enhances the city’s vitality and quality of life,” he said. “Also passed alongside the zoning code was a new sign ordinance that will help our commercial corridor have a cleaner and more cohesive look.”